
The Characterization Of The Main Characters in Janet Evanovich and Phoef Sutton's "*Curious Minds*" (2016)

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Abstract

Character is the most important element in a fiction story. Without characters, fiction would not exist. That's why characters can be said to be the soul in a work of fiction. Characters who will bring the storyline to flow as it should. This study aimed to analyze the characteristics of the main character in Janet Evanovich and Phoef Sutton's Curious Minds (2016). The author used descriptive qualitative methods in analyzing this research. The method of data collection is carried out by reading the related novel repeatedly and noting things needed for character analysis and segmentation technique according to Bordwell and Thompson. It was revealed that Emerson Knight with his brilliant, brave, introverted, out-of-the-box, eccentric, curious, and rich character traits is the key to the storyline until it finds its climax. Likewise with Riley moon. With her attractiveness, loyalty, smartness, and curiosity, she can be the best partner for Emerson in carrying out every plan. The extreme curiosity possessed by the two main characters has made the story very enjoyable. Curiosity led them to become an invincible duo and be the main key to which conflicts can be overcome even though they pass through various obstacles.

Keywords: Novel; Characterization; Main character; Literature.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a work made based on creativity with the aim of entertaining and giving many messages to the audience as well as being a means of communication of information in ancient times in many types of literature. Most literature is made in the form of fictional works. Some of them are also made to contain social issues or knowledge that can open the horizons of those who enjoy them. Literary works are divided into several genres such as prose fiction, drama, poetry, and prose nonfiction. What will be analyzed in this study is one of the intrinsic elements in novel fiction literature, which is the characterization of the main characters.

Fiction is imagined narrative and literature consisting of such narrative, usually in prose (Schirova, 2006). Character is the most important element in a fiction story. Without characters, fiction would not exist. Fictional characters also have personalities that can be seen from their appearance, the way they speak, their behavior, and what they think (Gill, 1995). Characters are not always human, there are also animals or other things that will be given personality so that they can become more alive. There are several types of characters, namely

protagonists, characters who have a goal and will support the storyline towards the end. Antagonists are characters who oppose the protagonist's goals in the storyline. There are two ways in which the reader can know about the characters' characteristics, there are directly when the author tells the characteristics through written text, and indirectly when the author shows how the characteristics through the characters' actions.

Janet Evanovich is an American author who has published lots of novels. Most of them are a series of novels and this novel is part of the Knight and Moon Adventure Series. She has been announced as the #1 New York Times Best-Selling Author with her best-seller novels. She has also co-authored several novels, and this novel, she co-authored by Phoebe Sutton, an American writer and film producer. This novel is about the mysterious adventure of Emerson Knight, an introverted and eccentric heir of Knight and Riley Moon, a Harvard law and business graduate who started due to the missing bank funds of Knight and leads them on another thrilling journey until exposed to several dangerous evil plans. This novel was published in 2016 and has never been analyzed and maybe this study will be the first study that brings such a review of this novel. The reason the writer chooses to analyze the main character of this novel is that the relationship between the characters and the plot is both interesting and challenging. When the personality of a character known to be an introvert must struggle with his curiosity which must be resolved immediately and take him on an unexpected adventure. This novel is quite insightful because there are many foreign terms and words that are not yet known by the author. This book is suitable for those who like books with theme of mystery, adventure, action, and the like. Also, there is a romantic and adorable side that tends to be very minimal between the two characters and will make readers bite their fingers and maybe smile to themselves.

METHOD

The writer uses descriptive qualitative methods in analyzing this research. Qualitative method is where the result of analysis will explained with words and sentences (Salombe et al., 2013). Supported by several sources on related topics about research on the analysis of fictional characters and literature. The data is taken from the novel entitled "Curious Minds" by Janet Evanovich and Phoebe Sutton published on 2016 in the United States by Bantam Books.

The analysis method used is the descriptive analysis technique which means the collected data will be described by the meaning with put attention and record to the aspects as many as possible (Agung & Tirtawati, 2021). Data collection is carried out by reading the related novel repeatedly and noting things needed for character analysis such as marking dialogues that describe the characters or information listed that can be additional and supportive in characters analysis of main character. To clarify the analysis, this study uses the segmentation technique according to Bordwell and Thompson (2008) as cited in (Dewi et al., 2021). In this technique, the narrative is divided into several segments that are revealed by the storyline. The sequence of this segment is further divided into several sub-sequences and contains the details of the events that will mark the characteristics of the characters. Markers can be in the form of dialogue or narrative descriptions which are then elaborated into data.

The data will be analyzed by writing a description so that it can make it easier for readers to understand. The steps taken are reading, understanding, and looking for important

information. The analysis of this research is based on the theory of Kenney (1996) as cited from (Ikawati A., 2016) in his book entitled "How to Analyzed Fiction".

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There were two main characters in this novel who mostly would bring the plot ahead. Emerson Knight was the most dominated character in the novel because all the events and conflicts were began form his curious while Riley Moon was the one who will following Emerson's action in every event.

A. AN ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER "EMERSON KNIGHT"

The following are list of Emerson Knight's personality that identified from the novel.

1. Brilliant

Emerson's character is seen in almost the entire story. Thoughts to words that are full of meaning make him look smart. One example of his intelligence was when he managed to guess the code of the safe in Günter's room. Armed with a small clue, a beetle display, and Riley, his equally intelligent partner, it all seemed easy to Emerson.

Evidence of this is found in subsequence 6a on page 58, when Riley and Emerson see a beetle in Günter's safe, Emerson removed the Rembrandt painting from the wall and open the safe. He said that it was very easy to predict the code from the lock of the safe. Riley asked how he knew the combination of the safe code. Emerson revealed that it was seen very clearly with the clues of the insect painting. Riley assumed that the painting was a fake and Emerson confirmed it. Gold colored beetle painting with the label '*Scarabaeus Caput Hominis*' or Human Head Beetle. All of this is a tribute to Edgar Allan Poe's story about a man who finds treasure with the help of a fantastical bug called The Gold-Bug. Riley also argues that Goldbug is also a term in investing where an expert recommends buying gold as an investment. So Emerson found it easy to guess it was the combination. And in fact all the clues are around that including the numbers written on a piece of paper.

2. Brave

Brave can also means courage. Aristotle defining courageous action as an act after very thoughtful consideration that needed in hard, painful, and hazardous situation (Hamric et al., 2015). This character is seen when Rollo, one of the antagonists tries to snatch a bag containing fake gold from Emerson's backpack and threatens the man with a knife in subsequence 9c. When they fled to a secret door in the Emerson mansion, Riley was clearly terrified, but it was different from Emerson's reaction. He didn't seem to have time to think about their situation, which was clearly in danger. All of that is illustrated in the dialogue page 90.

Emerson said it was as comforting as on a starless night or when he stood next to Riley and complimented Riley's good scent. When Riley fears that Rollo might kill them, Emerson says otherwise, that it's very encouraging where greater evil is about to take place. A woman named Maxine had been killed and now it was their turn. Riley said it wasn't part of his life plan to die there. With his unexpected philosophical thoughts, he reveals that life is a journey, not a destination and some people may have to live in such situations.

It's very clear that Emerson is by no means a person who gets scared easily. He even showed off all the martial skills he had to just comfort Riley's fears.

3. Introverted

This character trait is evident in subsequences 1b where Emerson keeps his housekeeper locked outside by changing his mansion door password again even when Aunt Myra is only out briefly and when Emerson finds out that Aunt Myra is with a stranger, namely Riley.

Evidence of this dialogue is on page 3, Aunt Myra tried to open the door but it was locked. He tried to call Emerson over the intercom and said he was locked out again. Emerson confirmed that it was Myra's aunt. Aunt Myra asked Emerson if he changed his password again. When Emerson answered, Aunt Myra asked the reason, but Emerson refused to answer. Instead he asked who was with Aunt Myra outside.

The dialogue illustrates how an Emerson is not easy to meet new people suddenly and without his approval. It was clear that Emerson preferred his solitude without the presence of strangers he didn't even know.

This Emerson's character is also described by Emerson himself. As the identity of an introvert who tends to be anti-social, Emerson admits it in subsequences 4c page 40. When he asked Werner why he had to bring Riley as his assistant. Werner replied that Riley was very good at communicating with people. Emerson asked again, then did that mean he wasn't that good at communicating with people. Werner admitted it because Emerson himself assumed and Emerson did not deny it. Personal interaction is not a good thing for him.

Despite asking rhetorical questions, Emerson did not challenge Werner's answers and continued to admit that dealing or interacting personally with other people was not his forte.

4. Curious

This character becomes the main star in the story when viewed from the title. Curiosity can be means a desire to seek out and explore something new like information or experience, unfamiliar events, and an interest in finding out something to learn in order to expand knowledge, competencies, relationship, and intellectual and creative thought (Kashdan et al., 2018). Without this character in Emerson, any conflict would not occur. In fact, Emerson's curious nature not only led him to his goal, but also helped reveal other secrets. This trait brings Emerson and Riley on a dangerous, challenging, thrilling, but exciting adventure. In subsequence 1f, it starts when a curious Emerson wants to see his gold in the Blane-Grundelwald bank.

The dialogue on pages 16 and 17 shows when Emerson feels he has doubts about the management system and security of his assets. The doubt disturbed his intellectual equilibrium, he plainly said that he wanted the gold. At first Riley tried to politely refuse because to see it, wouldn't be that easy, but Emerson insisted. He wanted to withdraw the gold because he felt it was his right, a right that his family held. Emerson had time to suspect Riley who constantly resisted the urge. Even when Emerson just wanted to see him, Riley kept trying to stop citing a security risk. Finally Emerson reassured that maybe Riley was afraid he would steal the gold because in reality, the gold did belong to Emerson.

The dialogue above shows how Emerson, who is filled with curiosity, is so stubborn and possessive of his gold. His nature led him to an adventure to uncover a secret about the existence of gold in America from New York to Mauritius. He makes Riley his assistant and partner in his challenging adventures, putting the girl in danger, from when Rollo follows Riley to the apartment and nearly kills her, to when they are captured and held captive.

5. Out of the box

When an introvert finds a stranger trespassing on his territory, he's bound to feel annoyed, but not Emerson. This can be found in subsequences 1e page 6. When he found out that Riley had walked into his library and even stepped on his feet, he didn't feel offended at all. When Riley apologized, Emerson said he was absolutely fine and was grateful that the pain of stepping on Riley's feet let him know he was alive. Emerson even admitted that it was his fault when Riley didn't see him. He said that he was training his powers against Riley, so Riley couldn't see him. Riley thought the boy was joking, but Emerson replied that he wasn't joking at all, in fact he never joked.

Actually the dialogue evidence is one small example of Emerson's out-of-the-box thinking and not unexpected by Riley. That's why Riley asked, "*You're kidding, right?*". That was because Riley expected Emerson to at least be annoyed. Instead of blaming Riley, Emerson preferred to blame himself for reasons Riley never suspected that he was training his powers to cloud Riley's mind.

There were also times when Emerson used a confusingly unusual term to describe something that could actually be said in plain language. This is revealed in subsequences 4c page 41. When Werner suggested Riley to Emerson as a personal assistant, Emerson asked Riley to agree with the foreign term "amanuensis" which then confused Riley. The woman even had time to think, hopefully the term is not a fancy version of the word "driver"

From the evidence, it can be seen that it is not only Emerson who uses a foreign term for something that can be called "personal assistant" in simple language, but also Werner as the boss at the bank where Riley works. It is not known why Emerson likes to use such terms when speaking, but that is his trademark.

6. Eccentric

The "eccentric" term can be means the trait where the people who had it will labelled as odd and freak, weird habit and behavior, nerd, bookish, and crazy but harmless (Neumeier, 2009). This Emerson's nature can be seen when Riley suddenly finds a large and comfortable weather-beaten Coleman tent set up in front of large stone fireplace in a large library inside the mansion in subsequences 1d page 5.

In the same subsequences and the same page, there is also a narration that shows where Riley witnessed the eccentricity of the host. She stepped the room and looked inside the tent. No one there, but it was very pleasant with bright colored silk flags hanging from the sides and ridged roof. A lightweight sleeping bag was neatly laid out on a camp cot. A small wooden meditation chair and an altar surround another wall. There were fresh flowers and some photographs on the altar.

The narration showed indeed looks quite eccentric to some people. As if to think who a normal person would pitch a tent by a fireplace in the middle of a giant library as comfortably as camping. it also proves Riley's first conjecture that the current owner of Mysterioso Manor is indeed "a bit different".

7. Rich

This character trait is clearly seen in subsequences 1a and 1c where the Knight family is indeed rich, judging by the design of the mansion which has its own name, namely Mysterioso Manor. It is mentioned in the first chapter of the novel. There is a narrative that shows the location of the mansion, precisely located at the end of a long private road that passes through the heavily wooded part of Rock Creek Park. The mansion is also considered one of the largest mansions in Washington, D.C.,

The excerpt above is shown in Riley's vision when he had just entered the facade or gate part of the night family's mansion. In real life, Rock Creek Park is a large city park that bisects the Washington, D.C. Northwest quadrant.

There is also a narration that describes Riley's point of view on the state of the contents of the Mysterioso Manor mansion, which is all dark wood and high ceilings. A large staircase with a blood-red carpet appeared in the center of the very formal foyer. The handrail is made of mahogany wood. Intricate chandeliers and wall sconces made of crystal. The side chairs, the center hall table, and the various chests and side tables were antique and reminded Riley of her grandmother's Duncan Phyfe dining room set.

The description above is like describing Riley's vision of Emerson's mansion as "indescribable" because it's true. All aspects and details in the Knight's mansion seemed very expensive to Riley who was actually an ordinary person. Imagining the largest mansion in Washington D.C. might make anyone instantly dream so high.

B. AN ANALYZE OF THE CHARACTER "RILEY MOON"

1. Attractive

Attractiveness can be physically seen but always had different perspective in every people as the meaning that something that people will find interesting (Sugiyama, 2015). In this case, Riley's attractiveness refers more to her appearance and presence. Only Emerson could see and feel it. Riley's presence distracted him several times. Normally he would ignore any unimportant things, but Riley was different. Emerson has revealed several times that Riley is indeed attractive to him, in subsequences 17a.

There is a dialogue in subsequences 17 page 160 where even when they are in a dangerous situation Emerson still looks to tease Riley. They are desperate because someone has surrounded the mansion and intends to arrest them. Emerson asks Riley to distract them, but Riley replied that she can't. Riley was afraid that they would catch her and shoot her instead. Emerson argues that Riley is a female and females easily distract males, so Emerson asks Riley to get out and distract them with her feminine wiles. Riley insists she doesn't have any wiles.

She even reasoned that Harvard Law, where she studied, did not teach lectures about it. Finally Emerson returned to being skeptical and said that Riley even distracted him all the time.

Apart from appearance, Emerson also found Riley attractive because he could make the girl as his partner in finding his gold as well as dismantling the existing evil plans.

2. Loyalty

Riley's loyalty to the task was astonishing. But that loyalty changed when she discovered the truth and she turned her back on the right one. Although her superiors considered Riley's credibility in the field very lacking, she was proposed to be an assistant to a wealthy customer. Werner as her boss also once praised her in front of Emerson as in subsequences 4c page 40. Werner gave Riley some sort of proverb where he said that Riley could talk to dogs off from a meat truck. He praised that Riley could be a good assistant to Emerson.

"Friday" in Werner's sentence means like an assistant. Werner said Riley would be a great personal assistant to Emerson. While it could be said that Werner didn't sound like praising Riley, but to Riley, it could sound like a compliment.

While Riley's loyalty refers to the truth, her loyalty is also evident towards her boss and clients. Just like when Rollo, someone who came to investigate Emerson came and asked his position on subsequence 9b page 88. Riley said to Rollo when that man ask who is Riley's master. She said that she had no master, but employers and client.

Before Riley actually switched sides to become Emerson's partner, she was actually an obedient worker under Werner, but when the truth was revealed, she began to doubt his loyalty to her employers.

3. Smart and Curious

Riley noticed that there was something strange about Werner when he and his brother was always asking for information about Emerson and lying. Riley knew his boss was lying about Maxine's death, and because of that, her curiosity level increased as well. To disguise her suspicions, Riley managed to come up with an excuse. This can be seen in subsequences 8b page 81.

Werner said police thought Maxine's death was due to a robbery because her wallet, watch and ring were missing. Riley, who witnessed the murder himself, began to think that Maxine was murdered and exiled to New York by a group of men in black suits. Hans said that he never had a chance to meet Maxine properly. Riley thought that Werner and Hans, his brother, had lied. Riley clearly saw that Hans met Maxine alive yesterday

In addition to the dialogue that took place above, Riley's curiosity and vigilance grew even more as Werner and Hans began to wonder. Riley hid her suspicions in the presence of Werner and Hans. She followed the flow of the conversation while exercising her ingenuity in fabricating lies. In fact, Riley was not only assigned to be Emerson's assistant, she also seemed to be a spy for Werner and Hans even though she didn't realize it until she found out that her employers was lying. Werner asked Riley about the progress of the investigation into Emerson. Riley tried to fabricate the lie that there had been no significant progress other than visiting Maxine, Gunter's wife, yesterday, but they had received no information about Emerson's gold.

So Riley said that what she and Emerson did yesterday was a complete waste of time. She also distracted Werner and Hans by saying that Emerson was a little crazy.

The real situation is that Riley and Emerson had followed Maxine's whereabouts until Riley finally found the truth. Riley's ingenuity in the lies she was revealing might have benefited him a bit and kept him out of harm's way. Ever since she found out about Werner and Hans' lies, she started to lose faith in them and side with Emerson because things really didn't look good after Riley found out about their lies.

Riley's curiosity also arises when he and Emerson are at Günter's house and find a gold beetle-shaped bar in Günter's vault in subsequences 6a page 58.

Riley's thinking ability was able to keep up with the conversation that took place between her and Emerson when talking about Günter's safe code clues which was why Emerson felt, Riley might be a good partner. In that conversation Riley learned that the term 'Goldbug' not only refers to an animal or Edgar Allan Poe's literary works but can also be interpreted as a term in the investing world, which refers to an expert in recommending the purchase of gold as an investment. Riley has two advanced degrees from Harvard law and business school, so this may have contributed to her curiosity.

CONCLUSION

This study contains the description or analysis of the characteristics of the two main characters in the novel "Curious Minds" by Janet Evanovich and Phoef Sutton. Emerson Knight, the male lead is known to have the characteristics of a brilliant, brave, introverted, curious, out of the box, eccentric, and rich. While Riley Moon, the female lead has an attractive, loyal, smart and curious character. They managed to become an unbeatable duo in finding contraband gold and uncovering an evil plan about the dirty banking system in the United States. These two people give a glimmer of the message that curiosity can lead to both good and bad things. For some things, we really have to use our curiosity for good, but there are times when we shouldn't know things. Even so, Emerson and Riley in this novel show that good cooperation will lead us to success. This study aims to determine the characteristics of the main characters in the novel Curious Minds by Janet Evanovich and Phoef Sutton. By knowing the characteristics of their nature, we can take the positive side and apply it in real life well because sometimes, there are some characteristics of fictional characters that can inspire readers both from the negative or positive side, but it's good if you can sort between those sides. as a human being who has a mind. This study focused on the characteristics or the trait of the main characters in order to get to know about the characterization better. Further studies may conducted in order to know about this novel better that can be take on the plot of the novel or any other elements of the literary works. Janet Evanovich's novels mostly can make the reader to gain more knowledge and critical thinking by several unfamiliar words used.

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